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THE WIFE'S SECRET.

IF I pride myself upon any mental endowment whatever, it is upon that humble one of Common Sense. I live what is called by the intellectual people a conventional life. I have my pew in the neighbouring church, and sit in it twice every Sunday. I know one captain in the army—just such a person as he should be—polished, and yet ferocious, gentle to ladies, but rather insolent to civilian males, boastful of his clubs, and giving all his leisure time, which is considerable, to the cultivation of his moustaches; but otherwise I am ignorant of the fashionable world and all its gay doings. I have made no endeavour to break through the gilded pale that separates it from the steady-going middle class to which I belong. I do not understand the feeling which prompts my superiors to be ashamed of being seen in an omnibus. Once every day I return from the City in a yellow one; and if it is wet, I use the same conveyance in the morning to reach my office. I pay my tradesmen weekly. My best sherry is 48s. a dozen; and when the captain talks of vintage wines (as he will do by the hour at my table), I often wonder what he thinks he is drinking. However, with true good-breeding, he imbibes it in great quantities, as though it were the best. I do not keep a man-servant. Our cook cannot compass an *omelette soufflée*. My wife trims her own bonnets. We have eight children, who all know the Church Catechism by heart, except the baby and the last but one. In short, a more respectable and unfashionable family than our own does not exist in all Bayswater.

Under these circumstances, it may be easily imagined that we are as free from the vices of the Great as we are without their Privileges; and this was, I honestly believe, the case until within a very recent period. When I used to read in the papers that the Lady Lutetia Day Coltay (of Norman ancestry and bluest blood) had left her husband's roof, and fled with Major Flutterby of the Life Guards; or that it was rumoured among well-informed circles that the

gentlemen of the long robe would soon find employment in the domestic affairs of his Grace the Duke of Belgravia, I used to give a prolonged whistle, and remark: 'Here they are again,' in general reference to the habits of the *haut ton*. I knew that our hereditary aristocracy were given to these escapades, which in my own rank of life would certainly be crimes, and I perused such details as the press could furnish with an avidity unalloyed, I am afraid, with much reprobation. I seemed to be reading of a class of persons whose way of life was too far removed from my own to affect me, except as a spectator; just as when I went to the play I found myself in an atmosphere of intrigue, and misunderstanding, and jealousy, altogether unreal, and with which I had not the ghost of an experience in common.

Jealousy! Why, I had been married sixteen years without entertaining that passion, so that it was not very likely, however well acted, that that passion should entertain *me*. Misunderstanding! The thing was impossible, for whenever there promised to be 'a row in the pantry'—and every married man will understand me when I make use of that metaphorical expression—I brought it to a head, and had it out, and off we started again (speaking for self and Mrs R.) on the smooth current of our lives, with the little fracas buried for ever in its depths. As for the mother of eight falling in love with another man—it is all very well in a stage-play, and particularly (with all deference to Miss Annie Dickenson) where the husband is a black man, and, as I have said, befitting enough among persons of quality; but upon the Notting Hill side of Bayswater any such mischance would, I felt, be out of place, and ridiculous—a social presumption, as well as a grave domestic crime. Imagine, therefore, my astonishment when my opposite neighbour, Peabody, who also calls himself my friend, did me the honour to call upon me a few weeks ago, to speak, in confidence, of the alarming conduct of my wife. Having demanded and obtained a private interview, this scandalous old person, who was once an indigo-merchant, and yet retains the trace of his calling upon his nose,

set before me in detail a number of curious circumstances connected with the 'goings on,' as he was pleased to call them, of my wife, which he was not, indeed, prepared to say 'might not possibly be only coincidences, after all,' but which he felt it his duty as a fellow-creature, and one who had been a husband in his time—here his lips made a dumb motion of gratitude—to let me know. Even as a neighbour, and an inhabitant of a common Crescent, hitherto remarkable for its respectability, and which, as I doubtless remembered, had declined to permit Mrs Jones to put up *Apartments* in her window, lest we should be confounded with the lodging-house localities; nay, which, by the mere force of its public opinion, had prevented No. 484 from being let to a playactor—even in this character, said Peabody, he would have felt it his duty to make me aware of what was being said, though doubtless falsely, respecting the behaviour of Mrs R. Here I should have locked the door, and informed Peabody that his last hour was certainly arrived, and that he had better make his peace with Providence before I cut his throat; but from ignorance of the proper conduct to be adopted in such exceptional circumstances, and perhaps from the knowledge that there was nothing but a paper-knife in the room with which to effect this righteous punishment, I only burst out laughing, and called him a meddling and impertinent old fool.

'Very true,' returned he, for he always makes use of that form of words—'very true; but still the facts are worth investigating, even from their singularity. Do you know, for instance, that at eleven o'clock, three days a week, your wife goes out in a cab by herself?'

'No,' said I, 'I do not; though, if she does, it is surely better than if she had any ineligible companion. As a matter of fact, however, she does not do so, for I have offered to go shopping with her twice this week, and she has declined to accompany me upon the ground of having a sore throat.'

'Upon what days did she give this excuse?' inquired Peabody, taking out his pocket-book.

'Last Monday and last Thursday,' returned I.

'Well, here's a memorandum: *Monday, 4th. Saw Mrs R. start, as usual, at 11; Thursday, 7th. ditto, ditto.* She could not be going to a morning concert, because she had no white gloves on.'

'I will grant that much,' quoth I sardonically, and yet not by any means unmoved by this unexpected unintelligence. 'My wife does not go to morning concerts.'

'Very true,' observed Peabody. 'Then the question arises, where *does* she go to? Now, as an inhabitant of the crescent—'

'Peabody,' interrupted I severely, 'I acknowledge the right of no man—no, not of the man in the moon himself—to meddle in my affairs upon *that* ground. I am obliged to you for the interest you have taken in this matter, but the simple fact is, that it has been entirely misplaced. I have been perfectly well aware of my wife's movements,

and they have had my fullest permission and approbation. I only wanted to see to what lengths your impertinence and love of interference would carry you. That is your hat, I believe; your umbrella is the alpaca one; I wish you a very good-morning.'

I ushered my visitor out, and then sat down in my private parlour with my elbows upon the table, and both my hands thrust into my hair. I had temporarily extinguished Peabody, but I was on fire with jealous apprehensions myself. What could it all mean? For sixteen years my wife had never taken any excursion unless in my company, upon which, she had always given me to understand, she doted; and yet, after refusing to go out with me upon Monday and Thursday last, on the plea of sore throat, she had started, the instant that my back was turned, in a Hansom—or even supposing it was a four-wheeler—in a cab, without white gloves on, and— Confound it, here *was* a row in the pantry, and one which my peace of mind demanded to have cleared up at once. 'Anna Maria,' cried I huskily, from the bottom of the stairs—'Anna Maria, I wish to speak with you immediately.'

'Lor' bless me,' answered my wife from the top story, 'it isn't one of the children, is it, John? Pray tell me the worst at once.'

'No, madam, it is I,' replied I stiffly.

'Then it's the kitchen chimney,' exclaimed she in a dogmatic tone. 'And didn't I tell Mary to have it swept a week ago; and now the fire-engines will spoil everything, even if we are not burnt out of house and home.'

Was it possible that this woman could have deceived me, as Peabody had said, and yet talk so simply of her children, and of house and home? By the time Anna Maria had got down to the drawing-room flight, I began to be rather ashamed of myself. When the mother of eight reached my sitting-room door, with her honest face aglow with animation, and her voice so earnest about the soot, I did not dare to mention what I had in my mind.

'I called you down, dear, to say that I was going to give myself a holiday to-day, and to ask you to come with me to Hampstead Heath, and dine at Jack Straw's Castle this afternoon, it being such a beautiful day.'

A ray of joy passed for an instant over her features, and then, as if recollecting herself, she began to stammer that she was very, very sorry, but really she had so much to do about the house just then; if I would only wait till Friday week, which was my birthday, then we would go somewhere, and she should enjoy it above all measure. This afternoon, however, the thing was impossible.

'Well,' said I gravely, 'we have not many holidays together, and I am sorry. You had a sore throat on Monday and on Thursday, when I offered you a similar opportunity.'

'O yes,' answered she, shaking her little head, which is very prettily—could it be *too* prettily?—

set upon her shoulders ; ' it is quite impossible that I could go out with that throat.'

' Here, thought I, for she could not have gone out *without* her throat, ' is some dreadful falsehood ; but Peabody may have told it, and not she. Perhaps she never went out at all. Should I not rather believe the wife of my bosom than that scandalous old retired indigo-merchant ? Was it not base even to suspect Anna Maria of deception ? Doubtless it was ; but yet I thought I would just satisfy myself with my own eyes.

' Very well,' observed I quietly, ' since you cannot come with me to-day, I shall go to the City as usual. I don't care for a holiday by myself.'

' Poor, dear fellow,' said Anna Maria coaxingly, as she helped me on with my greatcoat, ' I am quite grieved to disappoint you. Good-bye, John. Mind you have a good luncheon ; it's very bad for you eating those buns and rubbish.'

' Ah, what a tangled web we weave,' says somebody, ' when first we practise to deceive,' though after but a little trying, there's nothing easier than lying. I protest I felt like a pickpocket, as I dodged and lurked about our crescent, watching in the distance my own door, to see whether Mrs R. would cross the threshold. I suppose I have none of the attributes necessary to the profession of a Detective, for whenever a passer-by cast his eyes on me, I felt myself blushing all over, and hanging my head on one side, as a dog hangs his tail. I dared not, of course, stop in the crescent, but loitered at the corner of a street which commanded it, now trying to dig up the tops of the coal-cellars by inserting the nozzle of my umbrella in their circular holes, and now eliciting mournful music by dragging it against the area railings. Exhausted with these exercises, I had been leaning against a lamp-post for about ten minutes, when the door of a house opposite opened suddenly, and a widow lady of vast proportions came swiftly out upon me with her cap-strings streaming in the wind.

' Now just you go away, my gentleman,' said she in a menacing voice, ' before the police makes you. I know who you're a-looking for, and I can tell you she ain't a-coming, for I've got her locked up in the coal-cellar. I know you, although you have not got your red coat on to-day ; and mind—if you get another slice of meat in my house, I'll prosecute you as sure as my name's Mivins.'

' Gracious heavens, madam !' cried I, ' do you take me for a common soldier ?'

' No, sir,' answered she maliciously ; ' but for a tuppenny-ha'penny Life Guardsman, who never saw a shot fired in his life ; and if ever you come after my *Jemima* again'—

I turned, and fled—into the very arms of the abominable Peabody. ' Make haste !' exclaimed he ; ' there is not a moment to be lost. No ; the cab is coming this way ; you may see for yourself whether I am not right this time.'

And sure enough, who should drive by, at a rapid rate, but Anna Maria, in a four-wheeled cab, and without her bonnet, and with a flower in her hair ! This blow, coming so closely upon the attack of the widow lady, was almost more than I could bear. ' Where can she be going to ?' gasped I half unconsciously. ' It's the most extraordinary thing I ever heard of.'

' I have heard of similar things,' returned Peabody quietly, ' although I never experienced anything of the sort myself. Of course, I don't know

where she is going to ; but the direction she has taken is towards St John's Wood.'

I hastened back to my own house, and with the air of a man who has forgotten something, began to search in the pockets of a greatcoat hanging up in the hall. ' By the by,' said I, as the servant who had let me in was disappearing, ' I think your mistress must have got it after all. Just run up, and tell her I want to see her for a minute.'

Emily Jane, who had been in our service ever since we were married, turned as scarlet as her cap-ribbons. ' Sir,' said she, bolder than brass, ' missis has just stepped out ; she has taken two of the little girls for a morning walk.'

' Which two ?' inquired I, looking this abandoned young person full in the face. Her subtle spirit was cowed by this course of procedure ; she replied that she did not know—she didn't recollect—she hadn't paid particular attention, but she rather thought that it was the two youngest—all in a breath.

' In that case,' rejoined I, pointing with withering scorn to the perambulator, ' how comes *this* here ? No, Emily Jane ; your mistress must have taken out with her to-day the same two children that she took on Monday and on Thursday, when her sore throat was so bad that she could not go out with me.'

' Yes, sir,' replied she ; ' it was the same two.'

' Emily Jane,' said I solemnly, ' always tell the truth. I know all. Where is your mistress gone to all by herself to-day, with her hair so neatly arranged, and a flower stuck in the left-hand side of her head ? and that after telling me she was too busy to move out. Concealment is worse than useless. Where is she ?'

' Wild horses shouldn't do it,' returned the domestic resolutely. ' I told her I would keep it dark, and I won't betray no confidence as has been repoged in me. You must find it out all of your own head, sir ; O dear, O dear !'

Here, to my confusion, Emily Jane cast her apron, by a sudden and dexterous movement, over her features, and in that blinded condition rushed down the kitchen-stairs like a bull stung by bees.

At that moment, the front-door bell rang with a violence such as none of our visitors, except the captain, ever dare to use. My wretched heart seemed to experience a little throb of joy. He at least then—and I confess my suspicions had been turned in his direction, for was it not his profession to guard us from foreign foes, and to destroy our domestic peace—he at least, I say, *unless there was more than one*—I dared not trust myself to finish the reflection, but opened the front-door with my own hands.

It was somebody in uniform, but not the captain. ' Telegraph for Mrs R.,' squeaked the boy in his shrill thin voice ; ' please to sign on the right-hand side.' Then dancing a double shuffle upon the door-step, in order to keep himself warm, he broke forth into ballad, ' There's somebody in the house with Dinah, there's somebody in the house I know ; there's somebody in the house with Dinah'—

I didn't like his impudence, and I didn't like his song, but there was nothing for it but to submit. What could Anna Maria be doing with telegraphs ? From *Rupert Merrington, 6 Cupidon Villas, St John's Wood. Pray, be punctual this*

time. *I am engaged after twelve. I trust you will be looking your best, not pale, as on Monday and Thursday.*

'There's somebody in the house with Dinah, there's somebody in the house I know'—I rushed out with the receipt in my hand, and the boy snatched it, and took to flight, for he saw that I was dangerous. What *could* this dreadful message mean? or rather what meaning could it have but one? Rupert Merrington! not at all a steady-sounding name, to begin with: the sender, too, was evidently no business-man, or he would not have exceeded his twenty words so foolishly. It had a military smack all over (and I didn't like that notion—a military smack!). Merrington was of course an assumed name. The handwriting was good, and so far unlike the captain's; but then people don't write their own telegraph messages. I felt that some immediate action was necessary, or that I should be suffocated. In a couple of minutes I was in a Hansom bound for Cupidon Villas, in a state of mind easier imagined than described; and yet I had often read descriptions of it in novels which professed to describe aristocratic life, and often had seen upon the stage (although principally in farces) the husband racked by jealous pangs.

What had there been to laugh at in that, I wondered now! Why should the tenderest emotions of the human heart be made the subject of buffoon—But what a wicked-looking set of houses were these which I was now passing! If bricks and mortar—and especially stucco—*can* look vicious, certainly St John's Wood possesses a patent for—

'What number, sir?' shouted my driver, through the little hole in the roof. 'This is Cupidon Villas.'

'I am sorry to hear it,' groaned I, passing my pocket-handkerchief over my brow. 'Don't mind me, my good man (for his countenance evinced much dismay at my voice and manner); I know it is not your fault that I am miserable. Please to pull up at No. 6.'

Of all the wicked-looking houses in Cupidon Terrace, No. 6 was, it seemed to me, the wickedest. The round eye which formed its staircase window, winked viciously in the sunlight, and in the garden was a little grating, as though for the purpose of reconnaissance before admittance, which was not a little grating to me. The drawing-room shutters were closed. This latter circumstance gave me some satisfaction, since it might signify that Mr Merrington was dead, but a glance at the gay attire of the servant-girl who answered my summons cut away this ground of consolation. 'Is Mrs R. within?' inquired I, with a tone of assumed indifference.

'Well—yes, sir—but you can't see her just at present. Mr Merrington has a great objection to'—

'Confound Mr Merrington!' cried I, pushing my way in. 'I want to see my wife.'

'Oh, your wife is it, sir?' replied the maid with a giggle. 'Then of course you can go up, if you please, although it's as much as my place is worth. You will find them in the drawing-room.'

'What! *there*?' exclaimed I passionately, pointing to the closed windows.

'Yes, of course, sir! That's the room they always sit in.'

They *always* sit in? Then this sort of thing must have been going on for years!

I cleared the two little flights of stairs in a couple of bounds, and hurled open the drawing-room door like a catapult.

I found myself in a large apartment, darkened, indeed, upon one side, but well lit by a huge window (invisible from the front of the house) at its northern end. In the centre of the room was a raised structure, hung with purple, and rather resembling a scaffold decorated for the execution of royalty, and upon the scaffold sat my wife in an uncomfortable attitude, and with an expression of countenance that she only wears upon those ceremonious occasions which demand what are called 'company manners.' Between her and the window stood a gentleman with moustaches, and in a velvet coat—at an easel, and evidently painting her portrait. He elevated his eyebrows at my peculiar mode of entering the room, and looked towards my wife, as if for an explanation of the phenomenon.

'It is only my husband, Mr Merrington,' returned she. 'O John, I am so sorry that you found me out, for I had meant my picture to be a pleasant surprise to you upon your birthday next week. This was to be my last sitting but one; and nobody knows the trouble I have taken to keep you ignorant of my coming here. That stupid Emily Jane must have let it out.'

'No, my dear,' said I; 'I discovered the fact for myself, through the telegraph; and really I—I couldn't help coming down to see how the picture was getting on. It was so very kind of you. And, dear me, Mr Merrington, what a charming likeness!'

'Well, it's not in a very good light, you see,' rejoined he deprecatingly. 'Not having a room with a sky-light, I'm obliged to block up those windows, and manage how I can. It makes the house dark, and, I am afraid, caused you to stumble at the drawing-room door.'

'Yes,' said I, 'that was just it; I very nearly came in head first. I—I only thought I'd look in on my way to the City. I won't interrupt you another moment; and, indeed, I have myself no time to lose.'

I gave the maid five shillings, and—thinking it would be more likely to insure her silence—a chuck under the chin. Then I wrote to Peabody from Bunhill Row (where my place of business is situated), to tell him that I would not make a fool of him any longer; but the fact was, that, during the last few weeks, I had been making my wife sit for her picture, which he was to come and pass his judgment on as soon as it was finished: there was a question as to whether the flower in her hair was an improvement or not.

But I knew that Emily Jane would tell Anna Maria all about it. However, nothing was said until my birthday arrived, and with it the portrait, for which the dear creature had saved up her pin-money, and put herself to the greatest inconvenience. I declare my heart smote me for my base suspicions when I looked upon that honest face, which had never worn paint before. Upon that day, she said: 'By the by, John, when that telegraph arrived for me from Mr Merrington, it didn't make you *jealous* at all, did it?'

'Oh, dear no, my darling! Jealous of you? Impossible! Not, of course, that you are not beautiful enough to make all the world fall in love with you; but I never dreamed of such a thing.'

'That's all right, John,' said she, kissing me; but there was a wicked twinkle in her kind eyes as she added drily: 'I am glad to hear you say that, for, do you know, my dear, I almost thought you were just a little jealous.'

THE NEW RULE OF THUMB.

THE rate at which our age advances is alarming; intellect not only marches, but marches at the 'double'; and science not only travels, but travels 'express.' Until lately, two legs at least were considered necessary for dancing purposes; but now, one-legged dancing is all the rage; and the star—or, perhaps, one ought rather to say, the comet—of Donato is in the ascendant. Having progressed, therefore, to such a height of scientific and social blessedness, we may at first sight appear in danger of retrograding should we establish a 'rule of thumb'; but the new rule which it is proposed to introduce has little in common with that derided and obsolete theory. The new rule is founded upon a philosophical basis; it is advocated upon scientific principles; and the reasons for its adoption are to be found in the study of a science which, in these days of blasphemy against the classical languages, it is gratifying to find described by the imposing word *chirognomy*. Whether the increasing number of 'ologies,' and 'onomies,' and 'ognomies,' and 'atics,' have or have not any connection with the increase which there is said to be yearly in the number of our lunatics, this is not the time to inquire; we have simply to do with the new 'ognomy.' *Chirognomy*, then, professes to detect, by examination of the hand, mental development or organisation, artistic (or inartistic) tendencies, and moral (or immoral) qualities. It is stated, moreover, that 'if it be acknowledged that the superiority of the animal is in the hand, the superiority of the hand will be found in the thumb.' It is clear, therefore, that the rule of thumb is not an unfair description of the rule whereby the *chirognomist* is guided in his estimate of a fellow-creature's intellectual and moral characteristics.

Now, the length of the ears has long been considered, to a certain extent, a fair measure of mental development, though we are not aware that the subject of auricular elongation has ever been reduced to a science, and studied under the classical name of *Otology* or *Otognomy*. The protuberance of the negro's heel, also, has generally been accepted as a proof of his mental inferiority, but we have never yet met with a treatise upon *Podognomy* or *Podology*. This is much to be regretted, as we have always been of opinion that there is considerably more in a great toe than meets the eye, and that there is more reason than is to be extracted from traditional records in the peculiar homage which is paid to the Pope. Moreover, if there be any truth in the saying, *pes altera manus*, surely *podognomy* should be as worthy of study as *chirognomy*. *Phrenology*—whereby one's success in life, one's honesty,

amativeness, combativeness, benevolence, love of one's children, and abstinence from beating one's wife, are shewn to be a mere question of bumps on the head, has received as much attention as could very well be expected; but we are under the impression that it has fallen into discredit: at anyrate, it has not been adopted as a substitute for the usual routine in competitive examinations, or even as an infallible guide in the choice of domestic servants. A written character is more in vogue than a phrenological survey, either because there is a delicacy about examining persons' heads, and it is found that a request to be allowed to feel Mary's or John Thomas's 'bumps' might lead to some unpleasantness, or even because the public generally have no belief in phrenology. In the absence, then, of other trustworthy sciences which profess to shew how the inward man or woman may be divined from outward and visible signs, let us confine ourselves to *chirognomy*, or the rule of thumb.

Mr Beamish* follows in the wake of the *chirognomical* authorities, MM. D'Arpentigny and Desbarrolles, but he regrets that the latter 'has not confined himself to *chiromancy* or *chirognomy*, but has extended his inquiries to supposed planetary influences.' Mr Beamish himself is not inclined to go further than *chiromancy*, which we believe is synonymous with palmistry, and which, commendable as it very likely is, as a philosophical study, is so sternly regarded as a practice by the eye of the law, that the practical *chiromanist* who predicts a 'pretty lady's' fortune by the lines upon her palm for the reasonable consideration of a silver sixpence, is said to be liable to temporary imprisonment as a rogue and vagabond. But we are forgetting the thumb, which is the chief object of our remarks. Most people are under the impression that the thumb has two joints and a root, whereby it is connected to the palm; but this is very unscientific language. The thumb, be it known, has two 'phalanges' and a root; and the mental and moral consequences arising from the conformation of the thumb are not to be lightly regarded. Mr Beamish had in his employment, he tells us, 'two individuals born in the same sphere of life,' one of whom, 'by force of character, raised himself to respectability and wealth,' and 'the other remains in his original depression, a labourer at two shillings and sixpence a day, and, because of certain musical talents, the centre of public-house attraction.' Now, we are requested to trace the indications of widely-different careers in the illustrative drawings which are given in Mr Beamish's book of the thumbs and the hands allotted by nature to the 'two individuals.' We are informed, moreover, that idiots have very small and ill-developed thumbs; and as a proof of this, we are referred to a plate representing the thumb of the gorilla, from which it seems intended to infer that idiot and gorilla are convertible terms. 'Generally,' it is said, 'a small thumb is the index of vacillation and irresolution; it is also

* *The Psychonomy of the Hand*. By Richard Beamish, F.R.S. 1 vol. Pitman: 1883.

indicative of an accommodating and loving spirit. The large thumb, on the contrary, is the index of a strong will, and little general sympathy—in short, of the heart being in subjection to the head. The question, of course, arises whether 'an accommodating and loving spirit' may not animate a creature who is free from vacillation and irresolution, and then what is the rule of thumb? But to pass on to the 'phalanges,' or what common people call 'joints.' The first phalange is 'the index of will;' the second, 'the index of logical acumen.' If you see a man with a 'large, broad first phalange,' depend upon it he is full of prejudice; and 'if the second phalange be also deficient, the prejudice is invincible.' If the first phalange be longer and more powerful than the second, the possessor is a man of tyrannous tendencies; if it 'be of medium size, it no longer represents domination, but simply passive resistance;' if it 'be short and feeble, power of will will be wanting, and the mind, fluctuating and irresolute, becomes subject to the will of others;' if it be 'very short, resistance becomes impossible, and prostration is complete. Gaiety and sadness succeed each other without any apparent cause.' If the second phalange be 'long and strong, logic and reason prevail over impulse and will. But should the first phalange be short and weak, the individual hesitates to act.'

For a type of the 'philosophic thumb' we are referred to a portrait of the thumb of Dr Whewell, and are led to suppose that the celebrated Master of Trinity owes his elevated position not so much to his brains as to his phalanges. The root of the thumb is declared to be 'the index of sensual love;' and when it is accompanied by a 'powerful first phalange,' whereby 'moral control is established,' the result is highly favourable to the doctrines of the late Mr Malthus, and to the propagation of the Roman Catholic form of Christianity; for 'many ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic Church have,' says M. Desbarrolles, 'the root of the thumb largely developed, joined with a powerful first phalange; hence these men, whose lives are consecrated to celibacy, expend in charity all the energy of their tenderness. They sacrifice themselves for humanity as missionaries, and, if need be, as martyrs.' As for those unhappy beings whose fate it is to be born with 'a large root and feeble first phalange,' their only hope is in the logic of the second phalange; that, however, is but a forlorn hope, for it is asserted that 'in the struggle between passion and reason, reason has but little chance when unsupported by the will;' and the infallible M. Desbarrolles declares, 'it is an ascertained fact, that debauchees and unfortunate and degraded females have the root of the thumb largely developed, and the first two phalanges short and feeble.'

We would fain go on to the fingers, whether they be square, spatulous, or pointed at the tips, and to the lines upon the palm as indicating mental peculiarities, and as exemplified in drawings of many hands, including those of the late Mr I. K. Brunel, of the late Mr John Martin the painter, and of Miss Helen Faucit; but those who want to know more about the rule of thumb will do well to become personally acquainted with Mr Beamish's work. They will find it amusing if not interesting, and singular if not instructive. One thing seems

quite clear: if chiromnomy be true, a sort of fatalism is established; for every man will be irresistibly guided to good or evil by phalanges beyond his control.

LADY FLAVIA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LORD LYEN'S WIFE.'

CHAPTER XXIX.—THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR.

THE deposition of Hippolyte Perinet, doctor of medicine, residing at Pecq, près St Germain, and practising as a physician in the district: Is acquainted with the Royston family. Is medical attendant to Madame Royston. Has known the family for two years, ever since they settled at the Château des Roches: knows nothing to their discredit. Believes M. Royston, père, to be deeply in debt in England. Has never known him to commit any unworthy action during the term of his (Dr Perinet's) acquaintance with the family. M. Royston has a hot temper; he likes to be master *chez lui*. Has never treated him (Dr Perinet) otherwise than with politeness. With respect to the Capitaine Royston, fils, Dr Perinet's opinion is less favourable: considers the young man to be a *tapageur*, a person addicted to lamentable excesses, and a *mauvais sujet*. Has attended Captain Royston during illness and debility consequent upon a severe attack of *delirium tremens*, which he suffered from in England. It was after the captain's return to France that the doctor saw him. He is now convalescent or cured.

With respect to Lady Flavia Clare, daughter of the Right Honourable the Comte de Mortlake, *pair d'Angleterre*, brought up (*élevée*) in the convent of Our Lady of Carmel, at Grésnez-les-cloches, Dr Perinet deposes: That he knew the young lady in question, having been her medical attendant from the time of her arrival, a child of eight or nine years of age, at the convent; that she was a young person of the most sweet and engaging disposition, though somewhat timid (*crainative*) and reserved in manner; that her gentle character was a proverb in the convent, among boarders and Sisters also, where there was a phrase, *doux comme un agneau, ou la petite Anglaise*; that the Lady Flavia, feeling solitary in the midst of a community wholly French, and expressing a desire to speak her native language again, the doctor had persuaded the Dame Supérieure of the house of Our Lady of Carmel to allow an introduction to the Royston family, then newly settled in the Château des Roches, distant about three kilomètres from the convent; that an intimacy sprang up between the young demoiselle and this family of her compatriots, which was only interrupted after the return from India of Captain Royston, and in consequence of a warning which the doctor thought it his duty to give to the Lady-Superior.

Further, that he, Dr Perinet, well remembers Miss Amy Ford, and her arrival at the convent; that he only knew the latter young lady as having seen her with Lady Flavia Clare, whose intimate friend she was; that he never saw any signs of an attachment between Miladi Flavia and Captain Royston, but that he feared the probable result of propinquity in a case when two young persons, handsome and unoccupied, were thrown into one another's society; and that he was sure that such a match would be repugnant to common prudence,

the captain being without a *son*, and of dubious repute.

Also the said Hippolyte Perinet deposes that on the receipt of the news of the dangerous illness of the Comte de Mortlake, and of that nobleman's desire to see his daughter before his death, the Lady-Superior was in distress of mind, owing to the lack of a suitable person to accompany Lady Flavia Clare to the west of England; that he, Dr Perinet, had suggested M. Royston, père, as such a person, and that he had spoken to M. Royston himself on the subject. Finally, it had been agreed that Lady Flavia should travel under the care of M. Royston; and, to the certain knowledge of Dr Perinet, on the evening of Wednesday, the 9th of July, Lady Flavia Clare went to pass the night, by invitation of Madame Royston, at the Château des Roches. The reason of this was, that the travellers might be in time for the diligence which passes the gate of the château at an early hour in the morning, *en route* for St Germain and Mantes. At Mantes, the travellers were to proceed by the railway to Havre, and thence by steamer to Southampton, which the doctor has very pardonably described as '*aux environs de Londres*.'

Interrogated as to his reason for accurately remembering the day of Lady Flavia's departure from the convent, the said Hippolyte Perinet deposes that he paid a professional visit at the convent on the morning of that very day, and found his dear little friend and patient, of whom the doctor always speaks with much regard, in tears, and in very low spirits, being filled with apprehensions as to her future fate; that he, the doctor, found her intimate friend and adopted sister, Miss Ford, trying to console and calm her, and that he too tried to quiet terrors which to him seemed unreasonable; finally, that he is quite certain that the day was Wednesday, the 9th of July.

'You see, then,' said the Procureur Impérial, as he ceased the reading aloud of this document, and looked smilingly round upon the circle of attentive faces clustered about him—you see, then, how positive Dr Perinet is in asserting that on the evening of Wednesday, the 9th of July, Lady Flavia Clare went to pass the night at the Château des Roches, the more conveniently to start betimes on the following day for Mantes, Havre, and England, in compliance with the wishes of her dying father, the Comte de Mortlake. Is it not so?'

These words were spoken in the bureau of the commissary of police at St Germain, where it may be remembered that the Procureur Impérial, or public prosecutor, of Versailles had appointed to meet Colonel Ford, his daughter, his nephew, and the English and French detectives, on the Monday following his conversation with them in his own official study in the Versailles Palace of Justice. It was Monday now, and they were all there but M. Durbec; but if M. Durbec was absent, a number of papers piled up before the public prosecutor bore testimony to the fact, that he had not been idle in eliciting evidence during the interval.

The commissary of police had given up his office to accommodate M. le Procureur, and had retired into his dwelling; for commissaries of police are less important in the legal hierarchy of France than public prosecutors, and besides, M.

Duvillers-Hardouin was a man of family and fortune, wearing a diamond brooch in his shirt-frill, and counting kindred with imperial senators and consuls-general; and the commissaire, who wore a brown coat when off duty, and dined at one o'clock on cabbage-soup and sour wine, was inclined to be deferential to a man so eminently superior as the Procureur Impérial.

Colonel Ford was attentive, but rather dispirited. He could not exactly follow the thread of reasoning by which the public prosecutor was settling matters so much to his own satisfaction. Then, too, he had been left in the dark during the last few days as to the turn which the affair was taking. Sergeant Skinner had dropped in once or twice to communicate with his employer, but even he was either unwilling or unable to say more than that M. Durbec was very active, and that he, the sergeant, was doing his best. Altogether, the colonel found it rather dull in their Versailles lodging, and looked back regretfully to the days when fifty turbaned visitors in a morning left their slippers at his threshold, and when he had successfully pitted his manly English common-sense and downright earnestness against all the wiles of the Thugs. But Charles and Amy had a happiness of their own, and for them love had transformed the comfortless provincial *appartement* into a fairy palace. Yet Amy's colour faded as the family party entered the bureau of the commissary at St Germain, for she had little cause to expect good tidings respecting the dear unforgetten friend, whose sad sweet face arose reproachfully before her when she was happiest in her hopes of a rose-tinted future.

'Well, but,' said the colonel wearily—'well, but I don't see the use of laying so much stress on a fact that seems to be of no particular importance. Granted that it was on Wednesday that Lady Flavia Clare left the convent, and that on that night she slept beneath the roof of these Roystons—what then?'

The Procureur Impérial, when this remark was translated to him, chuckled with infinite self-complacency. 'Mademoiselle,' he said, 'I will entreat your honourable father to believe that nothing is unimportant in such a case. We have no right to despise the veriest trifle, for a grain of sand may turn the balance. Sergeant Skinner, policeman *célèbre*, will, I am sure, agree with me on that point, and so will Monsieur your cousin, my young *compère* of the British bar. And I beg the colonel to believe that I would not have trespassed on so much of his valuable time, were it not that the point is a vital one.'

Then the public prosecutor laid his hand on his heart, bowed gravely, and fluttering over the heap of papers that lay before him, selected one of them, and peered at it for some moments through his gold-rimmed glasses; then he spoke again: 'Dr Perinet has spoken positively to the date of Wednesday the 9th of July last, and, not to weary you with dry details, Scur Nanon, the portress of the convent—Louis Siret, the driver of the hackney-carriage that conveyed the young lady and her effects from the convent to the château—and his master, the Sieur Armand, of this town, agree in fixing the evening of Wednesday, July the 9th, as the time of Lady Flavia's departure from the house of Our Lady of Carmel; and I find, moreover, that two places in the *coupé* of the

diligence were duly engaged at the booking-office in St Germain for Thursday the 10th of July, and the *conducteur* was instructed to stop at the gate of the chateau, and pick up the passengers. So far, Messieurs, all appears correct.' The procureur looked round, as if to note the effect which his words had produced upon those present; then he resumed.

'But—and here I beg you will observe is the key to the whole affair—those places in the *coupé* of the diligence, secured for Thursday, were never occupied by the persons for whom they had been taken. When the *conducteur* stopped the diligence at the prescribed spot, he found no passengers waiting to be taken up; and it was not until his patience was nearly exhausted, that Monsieur Royston, père, came to the gate, and said, with evident agitation, that the diligence might proceed, that no one was going to take a seat in it on that day, that the lady was too ill to travel. The diligence accordingly proceeded on its way.—So far, gentlemen, there is nothing inconsistent with probabilities. It would have been very natural, indeed, if the sudden separation from the kind guardians of her infancy, from the convent that was to her as a home, and from the amiable society of her friend, Miss Amy, *ci-présente*, coupled with filial grief for her father's mortal sickness, should have brought on some slight attack of indisposition in a young and delicate girl. But it appears that on the evening of that very day, Monsieur Royston went personally to the booking-office of the diligence—that there he secured places, as before, for the diligence of the following day—and that he was even then singularly agitated, which in one of his temperament took the form of irritability approaching to *démence*. The booking-clerk having ventured on some common-place expression of regret that the former fare should have been wasted, Monsieur Royston angrily reproved him, using violent expressions, and declaring that before long he should be in a very changed position, and one in which people would hardly insult him by such impertinent condolences. This was the more remarkable, as it was well known in the town that Monsieur Royston was in needy circumstances, and as he was a great bargainer, and very close-fisted, as is not uncommon—pardon me—with your countrymen residing abroad.—On Friday the 11th of July, then, the diligence stopped once more at the gate of the chateau, and Monsieur Royston, accompanied by a lady closely veiled, but whose beautiful dark hair, worn in an unusual fashion, attracted the notice of the *conducteur*, entered the *coupé* of the public carriage, and were conveyed to Mantes, whence they travelled by railway to Havre. Here is a list of passengers who sailed in the packet from Havre to Southampton on the night of the 11th of July, and it includes the names of Brand Royston and of Lady Flavia Clare.

Now, Messieurs, we have to consider the evidence voluntarily given by Miss Amy Ford, and also the words uttered in delirium by the Capitaine Royston. We have also to take into consideration the fact, that Sergeant Skinner, who, in the character of an English commercial traveller, has assiduously frequented the cafés of St Germain, and has contrived to get into conversation with some young men, members of the English resident community, has learned that before his journey to

England, of late Captain Royston has been heard to boast, in his cups, that he was going to be married to a beautiful heiress, *riche à millions*, who must marry him whether she liked him or not. Also, that Monsieur Royston, père, has of late manifested signs of a suspicious tendency, going armed, contrary to the law of public security, keeping his doors locked, and refusing permission to his domestics to leave the house, even to go to church, or to market—all which circumstances point to one conclusion; and that conclusion,' said the Procureur Impérial, rubbing his sleek white hands together, 'is, that a crime has been committed; that something must have occurred to bring about either the substitution of one person for another, or a total change of character in the person chiefly concerned; wherefore, the law will demand from this Monsieur Royston frank and full explanations of what took place under his roof in the interval between the evening of Wednesday and the morning of Friday the 9th and 10th of July. And now to action.'

CHAPTER XXX.—THE HOUNDS ARE LET SLIP.

As the Procureur Impérial uttered the last words: 'And now to action,' as if evoked by a magician's spell, M. Durbec, agent of public security, came quietly into the room. He said nothing, but stood at the corner of the baize-covered table, silent and respectful, waiting for orders.

'Durbec,' said the Procureur Impérial, 'are the gendarmerie warned to be in readiness?'

'*Mon procureur*,' was the prompt reply, 'I come from arranging with the brigadier to give the word saddle and mount!'

'The carriage for Monsieur le Commissaire?' said M. Duwallers-Hardouin.

Durbec bowed humbly. The carriage, he said, was ready. It was at the stables, with the horses harnessed to it, and an agent would run down at the last moment to summon the coachman. That would be better than allowing the *char-à-banc* to station itself before the door of the bureau de police. Excess of precaution was never hurtful. And M. le Commissaire was putting on the *froc noir* and tricoloured scarf for an official expedition. All this M. Durbec said glibly and meekly, rather too meekly indeed. It was evident that the arrangements were not to M. Durbec's taste.

'You hold to your opinion still, my prince of all possible spics?' said the public prosecutor gaily.

The person addressed bowed and grinned. 'You flatter me, Monsieur le Procureur. My opinion! *pouff!* it is not of much account. But if Monsieur would have consented, I would have undertaken to hand him over this famous Brand Royston, tied neck and heels, like a calf *emmené* by the butcher, without the trouble of Monsieur le Commissaire, or the probable risk for Messieurs the gendarmes. And there is risk. Twice, as I have approached Monsieur Royston—*bel homme*, if there is one—have I heard the click of a pistol that the giant keeps in his pocket, and the lock of which he arms on the smallest alarm. If the arrest were left to me?—'

'But I say no! fifty times, a million times no!' said the public prosecutor decisively. 'We must use all the forms, all the preliminaries. Monsieur le Commissaire must knock three times, and address

the usual *sommations* to the suspect. *Comment!* if I would listen to you, Durbec, I should furnish a nice handle to the counsel for the accused. The prisoner's advocate would say in open court that we were midnight invaders of the domicile, lawless violators of the Code Napoléon. What we do, *ma foi*, against Monsieur Royston must be done formally.'

Charles Ford had been staring first at one and then at the other, and next he broke out: 'I—I beg your pardon, Monsieur, but are you really going to have old Royston arrested at once?'

The procureur smiled at the young man's eagerness. He civilly said that his young confrère of the English bar had divined his intentions: M. Royston was to be arrested.

Then Amy whispered in her father's ear, and her face was very pale, and her eyes dim with tears, as she did so, inasmuch that Colonel Ford turned to Sergeant Skinner, and asked him to play interpreter for once.

'Tell him, Monsieur the Procureur there,' said the colonel—'tell him, if you please, that it makes my daughter miserable to think that she should be the cause of bringing punishment and suffering down even on the heads of the guilty. This idea breaks her rest, and causes her many an anxious moment; and for her sake I am willing to hold my hand. All Amy wishes—and it is on her account that I have moved in this matter—is to discover the place where her poor young friend is kept a prisoner—and if these Roystons will confess that, they may go free, as far as we are concerned.'

It would be difficult to describe the expression of the procureur's face as this last speech of Colonel Ford's was somewhat laboriously translated to him, by the joint efforts of Sergeant Skinner and Charles Ford; but its main resemblance was to the countenance of Grimalkin when she watches a sportive young mouse venture forth from its hole. The half-shut eyes of M. Duvillers-Hardouin looked more feline than ever as they blinked through the gold-rimmed glasses, and the mouth contracted tigerishly, while the wrinkles on the high narrow forehead were gathered into a frown. But the public prosecutor did not speak immediately, and when he did, honey appeared to distil from his fluent lips. The excellent *famille* Ford, he gently said, must remember that the matter had been put into the care of Justice, and that Justice had certain requirements, perhaps harsh, that must be complied with. French law had a claim to require of M. Royston that he should clear himself of the grave suspicions to which his conduct had given rise. However generous and womanly the forbearance of Mademoiselle, he, the procureur, must remember his duty to society and the government; and Miss Ford must not forget that the best chance of seeing her friend again was to place the Roystons in such a position that subterfuge and prevarication would be in vain.

The Procureur Impérial continued to talk in this edifying strain until a heavy trampling of horses and clashing of steel scabbards was heard without, and immediately afterwards a policeman entered, announcing that the brigadier of the gendarmerie was outside. 'Let him enter,' said the procureur, and in came the person in question, with clanking spurs and heavy tread, his sabre tucked under his arm, and his huge cocked-hat in his hand. 'Bonjour, Monsieur Leroux!' said the public prosecutor affably.

M. Leroux was a fine-looking soldier, small in the waist, broad in the chest, standing six feet at least in his jack-boots, and wearing his silver *aiguillettes* jantily. He had a bold dark face, full of courage and intelligence; his wiry moustache was as well waxed as if he were still a sergeant of dragoons; and he wore the Crimean medals, and the cross of the Legion of Honour as well, shining on the breast of his blue uniform coat. Evidently, the brigadier of the St Germain gendarmerie had smelt powder elsewhere than at a review in the Champ de Mars.

'Monsieur Leroux, you are punctual,' said the procureur, bringing his spectacles to bear on the new-comer. 'You will be able to reach the chateau within an hour after sunset, *n'est-ce pas?*'

'Oui, mon procureur,' said the soldier, bringing up his gloved right hand to his forehead in military style.

At that moment, the commissary of police, neatly dressed in black, with his tricoloured scarf of office peeping forth from between the folds of his frock-coat, came bustling in. He was followed by his secretary, a lean personage, in threadbare clothes, and with no visible linen, but carrying a roll of paper, an ink-bottle, and a bundle of pens, as well as the brass stamp used for affixing the official *timbre* to the documents that emanated from the bureau. The duty of this clerk or secretary would be to draw up the *procès-verbal*.

'Monsieur Leroux,' said the commissary, as he reached down his hat from its peg, and adjusted the woollen comforter more closely round his thick neck, 'who are your best men?'

'Pierre Lulloux and Jacques the Norman,' answered the brigadier without hesitation. 'But, excusez, my commissary, if it is at the Château des Roches that we are to pay our little visit, it will be better to take all the men.'

'Why so?' asked M. Duvillers-Hardouin with a furtive smile.

'Because it is with Monsieur Royston that we shall have *affaire*,' said the brigadier; 'and Monsieur Royston is not a man like other men, *mon procureur*. *C'est dur, ça.*'

Indeed, the reputation of Rattling Brand Royston for the possession of extraordinary strength and courage was almost as well established in the foreign country where the stern old exile had chosen to pitch his tent, as ever it had been in the days of his reckless youth at home. His character extorted that kind of respect which we involuntarily bestow on a wild beast that is certain to confront the hunters to the last gasp of its breath. In Scotland he would have been called a 'dour carle.' It was difficult to judge of the probable conduct of so self-willed and stubborn a personage by ordinary rules.

'The carriage waits, *mon commissaire!*' said an agent, stepping in. This agent was in uniform, and had his sword and belt on. It was evidently a special occasion.

'The *ouvrier*—Chardon—is he in readiness with his tools?' was the next question. The policeman replied in the affirmative. The commissary then drew on his gloves. 'B-r-r-r! how cold it is!' he said, stamping his feet upon the boarded floor, and glancing somewhat reluctantly at the warm stove with its morsel of glowing coal. 'It is work to freeze the marrow of the bones, to be abroad on cold nights like these. You have the best of it,

Monsieur le Procureur, as you wait to have your criminal nicely caught for you—eh, eh, eh!’ and the commissary laughed at his own joke, while the secretary and agent, as in duty bound, laughed too.

But now, after a fresh whisper from Amy, Colonel Ford again intervened. He begged that no unnecessary harshness might be used towards any of the suspected family at the château. He and his daughter had no object whatever but that of obtaining the liberation of the real Lady Flavia Clare, whom they supposed to be illegally kept in confinement either at the château itself or in some other place of durance. But they were very far from wishing harm to any one, and would be content, their friend once secure, to allow the culprits to go unpunished.

The Procureur Impérial took these remarks in good part. He was in a humour to be pleased, indeed, with everything. Events had turned out admirably, when looked at from his point of view. In almost any case, there must be a trial and a conviction. And he enjoyed his little *coup d'état* in the matter of the sudden arrest all the more because he perceived how likely it was that, had he not kept his own counsel, his English friends would have tried to compromise matters by some direct proposition to Mr Royston; and in that case the bird would probably have taken fright before the snare was ready.

But the procureur was too diplomatic to give utterance to his thoughts. He contented himself with complimenting Miss Ford on her compassionate sentiments, at the same time deploring that his sentiment of duty forbade him, as public prosecutor, to indulge in the luxury of tenderness towards those who were suspected of a crime against the law, and a flagrant breach of hospitality. Justice must be done. M. Royston's violence of temper must not be permitted to screen him from the due course of law.

Then M. Duvillers-Hardouin rose and glanced at his watch.

‘By this time, Monsieur le Commissaire, your people are no doubt at their posts?’ was his question.

The commissary looked up at the dial-plate of the loud-ticking clock over his head. ‘Yes, Monsieur; by this time the house is surrounded—escape is impossible.’

Amy felt a chill run through her veins as she heard these words. Those of whom these cold-blooded officials spoke as hunters speak of the game they drive within range of their bullets, were guilty wretches, very likely, but human beings still. There was something saddening in the thought of men being chased and hemmed in, like wolves cut off from flight. ‘Go with them, papa, Charles,’ she said earnestly; ‘go and speak a word on the side of mercy—if that misguided man should really resist. Go and tell him to yield—that we will not harm him—will not bear witness against him—only let him give us up dear Flavin. Won't you go?’

The colonel shook his head sadly. ‘Discipline must be kept up, my pet,’ he said; ‘these gentlemen do but what is their bounden duty. I cannot interfere.’

‘I will go!’ cried Charles Ford impetuously, and Amy's grateful look thanked him for his compliance.

By this time a move had begun to take place

towards the outer door. Before the police bureau were three gendarmes, mounted, and towering like gigantic figures in the waning light. A fourth gendarme stood holding the bridles of his own and the brigadier's horse. The blue cloaks were rolled up and strapped behind the saddles; and as the horses stood clanking their chain bridles and pawing up the snow, the little party of stalwart troopers presented an appearance both martial and picturesque. A few yards off was a large *char-à-banc*, or open carriage, drawn by two horses, and with two of the police on the coach-box, one of whom held the reins. Beside this vehicle stood another agent, and with him was a sturdy artisan with an armful of smith's tools. The sight of these preparations had drawn together a little crowd of inquisitive idlers, who began to press rather closely about the door of the police-office.

‘*Au large, les curieux!* Be off, you chatterboxes, that have nothing to do but to stare at your neighbours!’ called out the brigadier, good-humoured but peremptory. A French crowd is submissive, and with a laugh the people fell back.

‘Have you loaded your arms, *vous autres?*’ asked the sub-officer of his men.

‘Yes, my brigadier, carbines and pistols both,’ said one of the troopers. ‘It is to the Château des Roches, then, that we go to-night?’

Leroux nodded. ‘*C'est bien* Monsieur Royston,’ he said in a sententious tone; ‘so, attention, and look out for squalls.’

‘*Connu!* my brigadier,’ said two of the soldiers at once, beating their white-gloved palms together to keep their chilled hands from stiffening; ‘a French *troupiér* only knows the word duty. *Ce sera rude*, all the same, Monsieur.’

‘Ah, ah! an old *dur de cuir!*’ grumbled a third gendarme, dismounting to tighten the girths of his saddle: ‘a famous cuirassier the old man would have made, I warrant you. You give us warm work this cold evening, brigadier. *Surpejou!* I could fancy it was Africa again; eh, comrades?’

It was remarkable that not one of these men for an instant imagined that their errand, an everyday one in their profession, would have a peaceful result. All of them had fought under the standards of France, in Algeria, in the Crimea, or at Solferino, for the gendarmerie of the empire is recruited from picked men chosen out of the cavalry corps. But though the very sight of their cocked-hats and shoulder-belts exercised a talismanic influence on the rural population, their weapons were not always borne for mere show, and they knew that this arrest was likely to be an undertaking of no common danger.

Meanwhile, the commissary, with his secretary, an agent, and the smith, took their places in the *char-à-banc*. M. Durbec, on the invitation of the magistrate, followed, as did Sergeant Skinner; and then Charles Ford stepped forward and asked leave to accompany the party.

‘With all my heart, Monsieur l'avocat Anglais. You shall tell them in London how we manage these little affairs in France,’ said the commissary very graciously, and, with some squeezing, room was made for Charles. Colonel Ford, his daughter clinging to his arm, stood on the steps in front of the police-office, while in the darkling doorway might be seen the figure of the public prosecutor, like an elegant spider awaiting its prey. The sun had set; there was a dull crimson flush of colour

yet lingering in the west. The stained snow in the streets, and the pure white snow that yet clung to the roofs of the houses, glimmered in the dying daylight.

'*Bon voyage!*' called out M. Duillers-Hardouin in his ill-omened voice. The whip cracked, and off went the carriage and its heavy load.

'We'll wait for you at the bridge!' screamed out the commissaire, in accents as harsh as the croak of a raven, addressing the chief of the gendarmes.

'*Bien, Monsieur!*' answered Leroux; and then, in a deep voice gave the word: 'Attention! mount! prepare to march;' and he swung himself into the saddle. 'March! *Au trot!*' And away went the miniature squadron, with a mighty clanking of steel scabbards against the stirrups, while the heavy tramp of the powerful horses resounded on the snowy pavement of the town.

Colonel Ford and his daughter, with downcast looks, took their way to the principal hotel of St Germain, where they had bespoken rooms, and where the young barrister was to rejoin them.

When the gendarmes were clear of the town and the people, the brigadier turned in his saddle. He was a brave man, as the cross of honour on his breast fully proved; but there are varieties of bravery, and a Frenchman seldom loses an opportunity for display. '*Allons,*' he said; 'keep steady, my lambs, to-night, for the credit of us all, as if we were going to deal with a Kabyle, rather than to pay a domiciliary visit. You have all been in Africa—all but Paul there—remember, then, that to-night we are going to seek the lion in his den.' No more words were spoken, but the little troop of horsemen pressed on steadily, the hoofs of their horses ringing sullenly upon the iron-bound road.

TREES IN A HYGIENIC POINT OF VIEW.

TREES, which confer so much beauty on many parts of the earth's surface, likewise exercise several useful functions, for which they are not always given credit. People plant them near their dwellings, to which they are supposed to impart a certain aristocratic air, though they have all the while not quite made up their minds whether to treat them as friends or enemies. Every summer, in the suburbs of London, you witness a sort of *arboricidia*, or massacre of trees, when the gardeners, with villainous knives, bill-hooks, and hatchets, strew thick the paths and pavements with the mutilated limbs of elms, lindens, and sycamores, leaving the parent stocks to raise their stumpy heads very little above the walls. The excuse for this exhibition of bad taste is, that the drippings spoil the gravel-walks, and incommode passengers in the suburban streets; for which reason, more than one sapient vestry has ordered the performance of this ridiculous process through the whole extent of its jurisdiction.

An idea, originating possibly in superstition, or else in mere ignorance, attributes to trees a deleterious influence, if planted near a house; for which reason, many persons prefer having their walls, doors, and window-frames baked and frizzled by the heats of summer, to keeping cool their domiciles by the delicious shade of a grove. Few old nations indulged in this way of thinking.

They appear, either by instinct or divination, to have discovered the truth which a subtle philosophy has now revealed, that there is in all soils a sort of virus, which will attack human life, if not counteracted by certain contrivances of art. Careful observers have noted that you may augment the sweetness of the rose by planting garlic near it; for the latter, attracting to itself the coarse and rank juices of the soil, leaves the sweeter and more delicate to find their way unimpeded to the flower. So it is with man's dwelling, to insure to which a pure and fragrant atmosphere, you must accept from nature those tall green chimneys called trees, which imbibe and carry aloft into the air those hurtful gases which, if admitted into the lungs and brain, might disease the former, and obstruct the delicate movements of the latter.

We find it to be an almost universal conviction, that trees largely contribute to insure health to man. Throughout Egypt, villages are built either in the midst of palm-groves, or in their immediate vicinity, in order that, during summer, the inhabitants may enjoy the delicious shade afforded by those majestic trees, which, mingling their evergreen leaves above, just allow the celestial beams to glance for a moment on their hufible roofs, and then again to be lost among pleasing shadows. When, mounted on your dromedary, you have been toiling for hours over the scorching sands, how delightful is it to plunge into the cool shade of a village grove, and listen to the multitudinous whispers overhead of the date-fans with which the breeze is sporting. Higher up the river, in every hamlet, there is an open space, in the midst of which rises a huge sycamore, which, throwing out its boughs on all sides, covers a large extent of ground with dense shade. Clean wooden benches surround the trunk; and here, during the great heats of summer, the men of the place assemble to smoke and chat; while the women, seated on prayer-carpets, enjoy a similar pleasure in secluded gardens.

In remote ages, prophets and prophetesses commonly made their dwellings beneath some spreading tree, to which came the members of surrounding tribes, either for the purpose of prying into the future, or to learn truths connected with their secular duties. Those personages were usually long-lived, chiefly owing, perhaps, to the calm in which their days were spent, but partly also owing to the wholesome site of their habitations. The yoghis in India still live, like the prophets of old, under leafy roofs, and weed and sweep the spaces about the stems of the trees so carefully, that not a leaf or blade of grass interferes with the cleanliness of their floors. Here they sit or walk, or go through their penances, while the sweet breeze plays about them, enters into their blood, and insures them health, with an almost preternatural length of days. The hermits of the middle ages cultivated a similar taste, and selected, some an oak, some an elm, some a walnut or chestnut tree, under which to tell their beads, and excite the admiration of their simple country-people. Travellers used to be shewn in Vallombrosa the grand old beech under which a renowned hermit had built his cell; and the belief survived, long after he had been gathered to his fathers, that the tree which had been thus honoured always looked much greener than its neighbours.

There was a monk in the promontory of Sinai who took up his residence under a noble acacia, which was fuller of leaf, more lofty and spreading, than any other in that part of the country. The devotees who went daily to minister to his wants, which were few and simple, attributed the beauty of the tree to the sanctity of the anchorite; overlooking a fact which might have accounted for the phenomenon upon different principles. A magnificent fountain of pure water gushed forth from between the roots of the acacia, which it supplied with more abundant moisture than that wild inhabitant of the desert usually enjoys. The Arabs of the neighbouring waste, though professing a different creed, held this monk in much reverence because of the supposed favour shewn him by the tree; and when one generation after another passed away, and saw the same old man under the acacia, they had recourse to miracle to explain his longevity. He lived, they say, twenty years longer than the prophet Mousa, or Moses, and might have gone on for ever, but that, growing tired of his wholesome dwelling-place, he wandered away into the desert, where he was killed by the simoom. Down in the south among the Coffee Mountains, where people certainly attain to a great old age, nearly all houses are built under the shelter of trees, which grow so near that their boughs touch, and form a canopy extending along the acclivities for miles. Under these umbrageous arches, the coffee-shrub puts forth its snowy blossoms, and ripens its delicious berries, sometimes in close proximity to the jasmine and the rose. In some portions of America, travellers imagine that trees are inimical to human life, because many of the cypress forests are unhealthy, though the trees run up with a clear stem to a great height, and, like the date-palm, branch only at the top. But it should be remarked that this kind of cypress grows in swamps, where, during six months of the year, its roots are immersed in stagnant water, where snakes, alligators, toads, frogs, lizards, and other repulsive reptiles batten in the slime and ooze. Where the ground is firm, forests are always healthy, if cleared of underwood and creepers, which obstruct the free play of the winds between the grand columnar trunks. It is well known that among the early settlers, many cut down the woods, and laid large tracts of country completely bare, which emitting their miasmata all at once, poisoned the atmosphere, and engendered destructive fevers. Those clearings are admitted to be best in which the trees are thinned, not extirpated; for when they dot the scene singly or in small clumps, they allure and keep up refreshing breezes, and pump up and diffuse aloft an abundance of noxious gases.

Our neighbours the Dutch plant their towns and cities so thickly with trees that they may almost be said to live like the ancient Britons in woods. Every day, as you walk or ride along, you see beves of industrious dames sitting on wooden benches, beneath an odiferous canopy of lindens, sewing or knitting stockings, or else engaged in other profitable occupations; and naturalists maintain that the trees which adorn the towns of Holland contribute very largely to render them and the whole country healthy. Every road, canal, square, and public promenade is bordered with trees, sometimes disposed in avenues several leagues long. The same taste has accompanied the Dutch into all their colonies, especially Java, where there

is no house without its grove. In the city of Batavia, built in the midst of a morass, every street is planted with trees in straight lines, exactly after the fashion prevalent in Holland. It is true that, in spite of these helps, old Batavia is still unhealthy; but in the new quarters, where the oriental substitutes for lindens are more lavishly planted, the air is pleasant and salubrious.

Even the famous upas, about which, in former times, so many deadly fables were circulated, is found by experience to be a highly agreeable neighbour. A friend of ours had one of these trees in his garden, which, instead of emitting fatal effluvia, afforded so enticing a shade that he used frequently to sit or lie under it to read or dream of home. Everybody in the East is a tree-worshipper. In America also, the gigantic sycamore, the live oak, the yellow poplar, and many other trees, are transported from the forest to beautify the neighbourhood of houses. Like the Roman general who took a fancy to live in a tree, and told his friends he preferred it to stately halls and gilded saloons, there was lately, in the Northern States of the American Union, a judge who resolved to study law in the same sort of pavilion. But because he could not conveniently go to the tree, he reversed the achievement of Mohammed, and made the tree come to him. Of this proceeding, one of the judge's countrymen, having described a sycamore near Marietta, which measured forty-six feet in circumference, says, 'we have seen one on the Big Miami, which we thought still larger. The judge of whom we have spoken cut off a section of the hollow trunk of another sycamore, and applied a roof to it, and fitted it up for a study. It was regularly cylindrical, and when fitted up with a stove and other arrangements, made an ample and convenient apartment. We saw this gigantic section of a tree conveyed on sleds prepared on purpose, and drawn by a sufficient number of oxen to its resting-place.'

Our towns would be far more healthy if trees were called in to aid the work of the excavator and scavenger—but not lopt and mutilated trees, which, instead of purifying the atmosphere, pollute and corrupt it by throwing forth deleterious miasmata from their wounded veins. The old mansions of the English nobility, though not always built on well-chosen sites, are yet generally healthy, chiefly because they are

Bosomed high in tufted trees,

which shelter them from the cold winds of winter and spring, and in summer prevent that sudden and rapid evaporation, which, after heavy rains, may generate disease. Nearly all the older towns of Germany used to be screened on one side at least by a grove, which, we believe, was always planted on the side exposed to the wind thought most hurtful in that part of Europe. Here in England the notion formerly prevailed, that walnut-trees diffuse around them gases so noxious that to inhale them during sleep would produce paralysis. This fancy by no means flourishes in Switzerland, where country-houses are often so thickly surrounded by these supposed enemies to human vigour, that you may pluck the fruit from your window. Close to a very pretty rural habitation in which we resided for a considerable time, were several lofty and magnificent elms, which extended their boughs over part of the roof. Talking with

the landlord one day on the close proximity of our leafy friends, he observed, that in some parts of the country, no man would erect a new house unless it were protected on the east by a few elms or lindens. 'A friend of mine,' he added, 'having been tempted by the offer of a large sum of money to cut down eight or ten lofty elms, under the shade of which he had grown up from a boy, soon underwent the punishment of his greed, for the house became so cold in winter, and so unhealthy in summer, that after vainly endeavouring to supply the place of the elms by a new plantation, he had to sell his birthplace at a loss, and remove to a distant part of the canton.'

In Eastern and Southern Russia, almost every hamlet stands in a grove, often, indeed, consisting of fruit-trees, to prune which, after the descent of the sap, is beneficial in a horticultural point of view, and no way injurious to health. It is the mutilation of trees in leaf that is objectionable. Of course, where no denizen of the forest is deciduous, it is impossible to avoid sinning against this rule, though even the least civilised of men are aware that the letting loose of the sap of many trees at once renders the air unwholesome. In the Indian Archipelago, therefore, when the natives are about to construct a village, they cut off, about forty feet from the ground, the tops of a great number of trees, and leave them for some days to exhale their juices in the sun, before they begin to lay down the floor of their future habitation. When kept clean, few places of residence can be more delightful than such a village. Most oriental trees diffuse around them a delicate fragrance in the morning, and this odour floating in clouds through the air, would, but for the habits of the inmates, convert those aerial dwellings into so many perfumed nests. Caligula, in one of his romantic moods, transformed an immense plane-tree into a rustic abode, near Veletri, and there waited on by numerous servitors, feasted and drank with his favourite guests. Captain John Smith, the second founder of Virginia, having a strong tendency towards the delights of a savage life, imitated on a small scale the freak of the Roman emperor, and, in the woods of one of our midland counties, made himself a cabin of boughs, where he lived rent-free for a considerable time before his departure for America.

In many parts of France, there still exists a strong prejudice against trees, for which reason we observe large tracts of country presenting to the traveller a bare and unsightly aspect. The inhabitants of Paris and most of the larger cities have subdued this repugnance, so that in summer one of the most common pleasures is to sit in shady groves, refreshed by cool breezes. Everybody knows the gardens of the Tuileries and Luxembourg, and what may be termed the wood of the Champs Elysées, which constitute the favourite resort of the Parisians. To the habit of lounging in these places, one of our poets alludes in the following lines:

Where, if one's romantic, one everywhere sees
Jew clothes-men like shepherds reclined under trees.

Even in the cafés on the Boulevards, if there be a morsel of open ground behind the house, it is sure to be shaded by a few stumpy elms, in dreary imitation of a grove; and beneath the imaginary shelter suggested, rather than afforded, by their

shrivelled foliage, the natives, in the enjoyment of rural bliss, sip their coffee and smoke their cigars. Objecting one day to a Frenchman that those elms looked very much like posts, he replied: 'C'est vrai, monsieur; mais après tout, ce sont des arbres;' which was not to be disputed. But the mirth below more than compensated for the want of leaves above. There appeared to be a consciousness in the old trunks which had enjoyed the pleasantries, and been blackened by the smoke of many generations. Down on the *Landes* along the sea-coast, numerous experiments were made before a tree could be discovered which would resist the influence of the saline breezes; but at length the *Pinus maritima* came to the assistance of the rustics, and effectually protected them against the corroding breath of the ocean. Behind plantations of this pine, villages and gardens are rapidly multiplying, so that it may be hoped immense tracts of land, previously barren, will soon be added to the domain of husbandry. Lord Palmerston, we believe, was the first person in these kingdoms to follow the example of the French. On his estates in Ireland, lying along the edge of the Atlantic, he has planted whole woods of the *Pinus maritima*, and thus has added to the area of cultivation a large extent of country.

It has been very reasonably maintained that even the terrible Sahara itself might gradually be rendered fertile by the assistance of this pine, for the soil having been formerly the bed of the ocean, more recently upheaved than the rest of the continent, is still so saline throughout the whole superficies of the desert, that nothing but sea-loving trees and plants will flourish in it. Once, in Nubia, we noticed a *Fellah* sitting under a sycamore lost in thought, and entering into conversation with him, discovered that he was a man of genius meditating on the prosperity of his country. Turning a hostile look upon the inrolling sands of Libya, he said: 'I have just been reflecting on the best means of keeping back these destructive invaders. I would plant along the edge of the Tell [cultivated country] two thick rows of this tree'—pointing with his finger to the one overhead—'and as they grew, they would effectually defend the valley.'

He was correct only in part, for, to accomplish the purpose he had in view, it would be necessary to plant, not two rows, but fifty. There seems to be a nascent spirit of enterprise springing up in that part of the Mohammedan world; plantations of sycamore, date-palms, and mimosa thickets are multiplying, though not rapidly; and if adequate encouragement were held out to cultivators, the breadth of useful soil in Egypt and Nubia might be augmented by one-third, and afford means of subsistence to two additional millions of inhabitants. A new plantation in the Nilotic valley is one of the strangest-looking things in the world; about each young tree is built up a round thin enclosure of clay, which looks like a diminutive well, generally about four feet deep, and about nine inches on all sides from the stem. The object is to prevent sheep, goats, and young cattle from browsing on the leaves; against camels, there is no protection but the bastinado.

Among ourselves, one of the trees against which the strongest prejudice exists is the yew, which, because it is commonly planted in churchyards, is called funeral, fatal, deadly, and what not. To

eat its berries, is equivalent, in rustic belief, to taking a quantity of prussic acid; and to sleep under its shade, quite as sure a passport to the other world as taking a nap in the Pontine Marshes. That these are absurd fancies, we know by experience, for we have eaten the berries a thousand times, and slept in boyhood on a grassy grave under its upas-like boughs, indebted to their dreaded shelter for protection from the night-dews. What may have associated this tree with death, is the fact, that with its wood men anciently made bows, which sent confusion and slaughter into many a great army. In other respects, the yew, sad and gloomy as it may look, is a sweet and friendly tree, close to whose stem you may sit dry in the heaviest shower, while you stay your hunger with its berries. How many a country churchyard is rendered comfortable by its masses of foliage; and how pleasant it is in winter to be sheltered from the outer gate to the porch by its dense and overarching boughs! One of our old poets, not in these days much read, breaks out into praise of the yew in the following fine verses:

Next came the melancholy yew, who mourns
With silent languor at the warriors' urns;
See where she comes, all in black shadow veiled;
Ah, too unhappy nymph, on every side assailed!
Whom the Greek poets and historians blame
(Deceived by easy faith and common fame);
Thee, as a guilty poisoner they present;
O false aspersers of the innocent!
If poets may find credit when they speak
(At least all those who are not of the Greek),
No baneful poison, no malignant dew
Lurks in, or hangs about the harmless yew;
No wily mischief dares the nymph invade,
And those are safe that sleep beneath her shade.

One of the most striking examples of the use of trees in promoting and preserving health, came under our own notice some years ago. A gentleman, along the extremity of whose garden ran a ditch, received no injury from its proximity, till, in an unfortunate hour, a thick row of elders, which grew upon the brink, was cut down. Almost immediately, low fever attacked the family, and not only reduced them to a state of great weakness, but returned at short intervals, till they removed to another locality.

HOW WE TRAPPED THE BURGLARS.

WE lived in a Terrace at the time in which my tale is laid, in what we may term a sub-district of London, for we were within five miles of Charing Cross, and the dark month of December was upon us. Robberies had been frequent in our neighbourhood, and no less than three houses out of the ten in the Terrace had been entered by burglars and robbed, and yet no discovery of the thieves had taken place. So ably, also, had the work of entry been accomplished, that in no case had the inmates been alarmed; and it was not until the servants descended in the morning that the discovery of a robbery was made.

In two out of the three cases, an entrance had been effected through a pantry-window, by removing a pane of glass, and cutting a small hole in the shutter. This window was on the ground-floor, and could easily be reached, therefore, from outside. In the third robbery, an upper window was entered by

means of a knife which forced back the fastening, and of course allowed the sash to be raised.

So rapidly had these robberies occurred, that the whole neighbourhood was alarmed. The police shook their heads, and looked knowing, but did nothing; and what was much to be lamented, failed to find any clue to the robbers, who, they at the same time asserted, were evidently not regular cracksmen.

Affairs had reached such a stage, that we used to sleep with a revolver close to our bedside, when we happened to have a friend who came to stay with us a few days. This friend was an old jungle-hunter, and was *au fait* at every artifice by which the animal creation might be captured. He was delighted at the idea of having an adventure with burglars, and scorned the belief that they were more than a match in cunning for even the average bush-hunter. It was in vain that we assured him it was an axiom that an accomplished robber could effect an entrance into any house; and that instruments were used of such a nature as to cut holes in doors without noise, and, in fact, that through roofs and sky-lights, down chimneys, and up waterspouts, an accomplished burglar could easily enter the best defended house in the kingdom.

Our friend's argument was, that a burglar was a man on watch, who took advantage of the residents being asleep and unsuspecting; 'but,' said he, 'let my suspicions be raised, and I will defy any burglar to enter my house without my having due warning; because, although I may be asleep, still, I shall hear his approach, and can then make my arrangements to welcome him.'

Although we were not desirous of having our house robbed, yet we wished much that our friend's confidence should be taken out of him.

A few days after this conversation, the police informed us that several suspicious characters had been seen about, and recommended us to be on the alert. Here, then, was a good opportunity to test my friend's skill and wakefulness; so, having informed him of the policeman's warning, I asked him if he felt confident to undertake the defence of the house.

'Certainly,' he replied; 'I only demand a dark lantern, and stipulate that you have a pair of goloshes beside your bed. I also must go to bed last, and no servant is to go down stairs before me in the morning; nor is any one to walk about during the night: then I will defy the burglars.'

Thus it was agreed that my friend was to act the part of guardian, and was to commence his charge on the ensuing night.

Three nights had passed, and no alarms had occurred, and no robberies taken place; we began to think our alarms had been groundless; but our friend said that *now* was the very time to be most guarded, for that no wise burglar would rob when he was expected; besides, he said, we have not had a windy night yet; it is when doors and windows rattle, and the chimney rumbles, that robberies are best effected, not when every strange noise is audible: thus, he said, he did not give up hopes of yet having something to say to the robbers before his visit terminated.

I usually sleep very lightly, and therefore awoke readily upon hearing a tap at my bedroom door during the fourth night of our watch. It was my friend's voice that answered me, and we were requested to come out at once.

'As soon as I strike a lucifer-match,' I replied.

'Nonsense, man; a light will spoil the whole thing. Come in the dark; slip on a dressing-gown and your goloshes, and come at once.'

I was soon provided as he wished, and ready to descend the stairs in the dark.

'Now, remember,' said my friend, 'there are seven steps to the first landing, twelve others afterwards, and the fourth step creaks abominably, so be careful to descend without noise.'

The night was boisterous, and many a window and door shook and rattled, so that the slight noise we made in descending the stairs was not sufficient to have alarmed even the most keen-eared listener. We descended to the ground-floor, entered the pantry, and then standing perfectly still, devoted ourselves to listening.

In a very few seconds we heard a grating noise on the shutter, then an interval of quiet, and again a noise; presently the window was gently raised, and again all was quiet. The noise of a heavy vehicle passing the house seemed to afford an opportunity for a more decided effort, for while the rattle of the wheels was loudest, a crack sounded from the shutter, and we could hear that the bolt was forced, for the shutter was gently moved.

'Don't stir till I do, and hold your breath if possible,' whispered my friend in my ear.

I found the latter a difficult request to comply with, for my heart was beating with rapidity, and thumping against my ribs in the most excited way; still I stood quiet, and trusted to my friend.

Nothing could be more cautious than the proceedings of the robbers; the shutter was pushed back in the most slow and steady manner; had there been even a bell fastened to it, I doubt whether it would have been made to ring. At intervals, there was a rest from work, evidently for the purpose of listening, and then one of the robbers placed his leg across the window-sill, and lightly descended into the pantry.

The night, even out of doors, was very dark, and in the corner where we stood it was black as Erebus, our forms, therefore, were quite undistinguishable, and the only chance of discovering us was by touching or hearing us.

The first burglar was soon followed by a second, whilst we could hear that a third, who was outside, was to remain there on watch.

'Now let's light up,' said number two.

'Not yet, till you push the shutter to,' replied the other, 'or the glim'll be seen; then you come and hold the box.'

The shutter was quietly pushed to, and both robbers moved away a few paces from the window by which they had entered. By the quiet way in which they walked, it was evident that they were either without shoes or had on India-rubber coverings. Of their size or weapons, we could see nothing, and I began to doubt whether our position was an agreeable one, as I was armed only with a sword, a weapon, however, I knew how to use; whilst of my friend's means of offence or defence I knew nothing.

I had not long to wait, for a lucifer was struck by one of the men immediately, and the room consequently lighted up; at the same instant my friend drew up the slide of the dark lantern, and flashed the light on the faces of the two men, at the same time shewing the muzzle of a revolver pointed towards them.

'If either of you move, I'll put a couple of bullets in him,' said my friend, as he placed his back against the window by which the men had entered. 'Now drop that crow-bar,' he continued, in a voice of authority; 'down with it; and you,' he said to me, 'pull open the shutter, and shout for the police.'

The idea that is usually entertained of a burglar is, that he is a man of great size, strength, and daring, and that he would in an encounter annihilate any moderate man. When, then, the light revealed the faces and forms of the men we had captured, our humble self, although no great pugilist, yet felt able to defeat either of them if it came to a matter of fists; and I must own that the pale and astonished faces of the men were not indicative of any very great courage.

Our shout for police was shortly answered; and the burglars having been subdued by the sight of the revolver, the muzzle of which pointed first at one, then at the other, were captured by the police, three of whom were speedily on the spot, and conveyed to the lock-up; whilst we and a detective who had been brought down from London some days previously, examined the details by which the men had effected an entrance.

'You were very lucky to hear them, especially on such a night,' said the detective; 'when once they're in they move like mice. We know them; and I expect they'll get seven years.'

The man was about correct, for one, the older offender, was sentenced to six, the other to five years' penal servitude.

'It will, I suppose, be of no use trying to sleep again to-night, for it is three o'clock,' said my friend.

'I cannot sleep,' was my reply; 'and I am dying to hear how you found out that these men were approaching the house.'

Being, then, of one mind, we partly robed ourselves, lighted a fire in the kitchen, and soon being provided with cigars and grog, got very comfortable, and satisfied with our work. My friend then began his account, which he gave much in the following words:

'The burglar, as I told you, has usually the advantage of surprise; he can select the time at which he makes his attack, and if his proceedings are carried on cautiously, he enters a house before he is heard. Few men would, however, venture to do so, unless they previously had good information as to the interior arrangements of the house; this they obtain either from servants, tradesmen, or some one who visits the locality, or they come themselves as tramps, or with some trifle to sell. Thus, if there are bells attached to doors or windows, they find it out; and they know tolerably well the domestic arrangements of the locality they purpose trying their skill upon. There are, too, conventional methods of protecting a house, such as bolts, bars, chains, locks, &c., all of which require merely time and proper instruments to overcome. It therefore occurred to me that novelty and simplicity combined would be more than a match for the coarse intellect of a burglar, and thus I made my plans, which, you see, answered very well.'

'No doubt about that,' we replied.

'Well now, come up to my room,' he continued, 'and see the apparatus.'

We entered his room, and there, close beside his

pillow, was a tin box, in the bottom of which was a key.

'This is nearly all the apparatus,' he said; 'but you notice some thread fastened to the key; trace that thread, and you will find it passes through that small hole in the sash; from there it goes down to the back-yard; and now you will comprehend my plan. I knew that no man could approach the back-part of the house without walking up the back-yard, which is only four yards wide. I therefore tied across the back-yard, and about two feet from the ground, some fine black thread; this was made fast on one side, but slipped through a loop, and led up to my window on the other. The thread then passed through the hole I had bored in the window-sash, and was then made fast to this key. Under the key I placed the tin box, you see; and over the key was a bar, to prevent its being dragged up more than six inches. Each night, before I went to bed, I just drew the string tight, and fastened it in the yard, taking care to free it before morning, so as to keep the plan a secret. If, then, a man, or anything above two feet high, walked up the yard, the string was pressed against, the key was drawn up sharply against the bar, and the string broken, when the key, of course, fell into the tin box, making quite noise enough to wake me. Immediately the string or thread broke, it would fall to the ground; and the person who had done all this would not have felt anything, the resistance being so slight. I must own I should have preferred horse-hair to thread, but as it was, the latter answered very well. I was fast asleep when the key fell, but immediately awoke, and taking my lantern outside my door, lighted it, and came to you, for I knew that a man only in the back-yard could have dropped my key. So now you see how the burglars were trapped, for you know all the rest.'

'Certainly, you succeeded, and so we ought not to be critical,' we replied. 'But suppose they had entered by the front-window, instead of by the back, how then?'

'You see this thread,' he said, grasping one that was near the door; 'pull it.'

I did so, and immediately a tin cup dropped into the hand-basin.

'That thread goes down stairs, and is fastened across the front-window; but I broke that off as I went out of my room, so that it should not impede my journey down stairs. Thus I could at once know whether a man was approaching the back-door or had entered by the front-window, and in either case, I think I could have captured him.'

Simplicity had certainly been adopted in the present case, but the means had shewn themselves to be efficient.

'People are usually very silly,' continued our friend, 'when they hear, or think they hear, suspicious noises of a night. The first thing they usually do is to light a candle, which proclaims to the robber that he has been heard, and must escape; then they go about the house with this candle, and make a great noise, so that a man may have plenty of time to get away, or to hide himself. Instead of this, if a person were to listen intently, he would be able to hear any suspicious noises distinctly, and decide upon their cause; then, as he must know his own house better than a robber, he is best off of the two in the dark; and when,

having armed himself, he has quietly opened his door, he may wait and listen until the robbers are heard moving about, when he may take such steps as may seem necessary. If every person were merely to plan what was to be done in case of robbers entering his house, and then were to carry out this if the occasion required it, burglary would be too dangerous and unsuccessful a proceeding to be popular or profitable, and thus might be given up for a more honest means of obtaining a livelihood; so that really we may consider ourselves to have done the community at large a benefit, when we capture one of these gentry; whilst those who allow their houses to be robbed with impunity, jeopardise their neighbours' property.'

THE CAIRN.

CARADOC with the golden torque,
Amber anklets and sword of bronze,
A wolf-skin clothing his giant limbs,
Tawny with thirty summers' suns,
Was slain beneath those great beech-trees
By Roman spearmen, who had found
His last retreat, and burnt his hut,
And dragged his wife in slavery bound.

Now see the mound, that scarcely swells
Above the level of the downs,
Upon whose summit, dry and sear,
Ground-thistles spread their purple crowns;
And round it nets the dry crisp thyme
The bees love so; those beech-trees wave
Just where the Roman spearmen struck,
And Caradoc had here his grave.

'Twas fourteen hundred years ago;
And now the thrush upon the thorn
Sings heedless of that chieftain's fate;
And on this golden July morn,
A little butterfly, all blue,
In the mid air is hovering
Around the flowering grass that grows
Above the ashes of the king.

And far away the cornfields stretch
In golden sections, fading dim,
To the gray ridge of further down;
That burring murmur is the hymn
Of the great conqueror Steam, the chief
Of new reformers. See that whiff
Of flying smoke—that is the train;
It burrows in the tunnelled cliff.

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